



## Services for veterans

April 2012

Doc. #FS-0006-A

**Veterans are eligible for wide array of employment-related services**

**WorkSource has specialists who focus solely on veterans**

**State agencies work together to meet each veteran's needs**

**Early contact with veterans is a key to success**

The Employment Security Department provides a wide array of services to help military veterans find jobs and to support them financially while they look and/or train for work. Most of these services are arranged or provided through WorkSource offices that are located all over Washington and at the Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Lewis.

### **More on employment services for veterans**

**Federal funding** ~ The Employment Security Department applies annually to the federal Department of Labor for grant funds that are available under the Jobs for Veterans Act. These funds are allocated based on the number of unemployed military veterans in our state. Washington state's funding has consistently remained at \$4 million per year.

The funds are used solely to support two categories of veterans specialists (local veterans-employment representatives and disabled-veterans outreach program specialists) at the WorkSource offices; no state funding is used for these positions. The veterans specialists are responsible for promoting the hiring of veterans, particularly recently discharged veterans, and assisting veterans who face significant barriers to getting hired, such as disabled veterans. They also work with local businesses that hold federal contracts to help them recruit potential veteran candidates to fill vacancies.

**Coordination with other agencies** ~ WorkSource staff partner with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Division to coordinate the right mix of services that each veteran needs to prepare for and find a job. For example, veterans have access to a range of skill-development opportunities (which might range from a one-day class to a vocational course to an apprenticeship or a college degree). They also provide information and counseling on how to look for a job, referrals to job openings and labor-market information about the types of jobs that are in demand in their communities.

WorkSource works with the state's Department of Veterans Affairs to provide employment assistance to veterans enrolled in the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program and to residents of the Building 9 Veteran Transitional Housing Project in Retsil.

**Coordination with the military** ~ WorkSource has a veterans specialist embedded within the Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Lewis, providing services to members of all branches of the military (including active-duty, National Guard and the reserves) who were injured in combat. The specialist identifies potential occupations, performs skill and interest assessments and prepares the veterans for the transition to civilian life.

**Apprentice  
programs hone  
skills for  
good-paying  
jobs**

WorkSource also participates in events hosted by the state and federal military departments for National Guard and active-duty members who are scheduled to return from federal activation or to be discharged. The WorkSource veteran specialists provide information about eligibility for unemployment-insurance benefits, the types of services available through local WorkSource offices, the availability of training and apprenticeship programs and other programs for which they are eligible.

***Apprenticeship programs*** ~ Many veterans have skills that transfer well into the construction industry, but they lack the formal training and certifications that may be required. Apprenticeships are a good way to complete their training while earning a living and gaining valuable on-the-job-experience. WorkSource employment counselors refer veterans to any of the registered apprenticeship programs in the state and to the Helmets-to-Hard-Hats apprenticeship program operated by the Building & Construction Trades Council. Helmets-to-Hard-Hats was created specifically to recruit and streamline the application and screening process to encourage veterans to enter the construction industry.

**New  
employment  
initiatives help  
veterans get  
back to work**

***New focus for 2012*** ~ A new state law passed in 2011 allows private-sector businesses to offer a hiring preference to veterans. Moving forward, WorkSource staff will help connect qualified veterans with employers who wish exercise this preference in their hiring.

In addition, the federal Department of Labor has launched a new employment initiative for post-9/11 veterans called Gold Card. Eligible veterans can present the Gold Card at a local WorkSource center to receive a six-month enhanced package of services that includes:

- Case management
- Skill assessments and interest surveys
- Career guidance
- Job-search assistance

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